GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:105
ANSWERED ON:20.11.2000
SHRINKING OF FOREST LAND
SRINIVASULU KALAVA

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether area under reserved forests is shrinking with each passing year due to mining activities;

(b) if so, whether on several occasions rules regulating the forest areas have been relaxed to make room for mining in forest areas;

(c) if so, the extent of forest land released for the purpose of mining; and

(d) the details of forest lands so far released for mining in Andhra Pradesh and the number of applications pending for the release of forest land for mining in the State?

Answer

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU)

(a)&(b) No Sir. Under the provision of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, forest land can be diverted for non-forestry purposes including mining, subject to fulfilment of condition of raising compensatory afforestation over equivalent non-forest land (transferred to Forest Department) or double degraded forest land, as the case may be, and adequate environmental safeguards are also stipulated. Moreover, such approval is given only after ascertaining that mining activity is site specific and is confined to barest minimum forest area.

(c) During the last three years i.e. 1997-1999, 176 mining proposals have been approved under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for diversion of 24967.956 hectare of forest land where 6174.58 hectare is for fresh mining and 18793.376 hectare is for renewal of mining leases.

(d) During the last three years (1997-1999), 5164.05 hectare of forest land has been approved for mining purposes under the aforesaid Act in the State of Andhra Pradesh where 625.84 hectare is for fresh mining and 4538.21 hectare (including 4147 hectare for renewal of underground mining of coal) is for renewal of mining lease. Nine mining proposals pertaining to State of Andhra Pradesh are under consideration of the Ministry where three are under active consideration of the Ministry and six are pending with the State Government for furnishing essential additional information.